MODERN PHILOSOPHY
PHIL 4322.001       Spring 2015
Time: Monday & Wednesday 3:30-4:45      Location: ECDC-219C

Instructor: Prof. Glenn Tiller
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Office hours: 12:45-3:15 Monday and Wednesday and by appointment.

Course Description
This course is an introduction to the leading figures of the Modern philosophy era (1600-1800). The central focus is on the epistemological and metaphysical issues discussed in the writings of Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and Hume. Our goal is to uncover the presuppositions and analyse the arguments found in both rationalist and empiricist accounts of knowledge, the nature of the universe, and our place within it.

Student Learning Outcomes
Successful completion of the course provides you with a foundational understanding of Modern Philosophy. In particular, you will be familiar with basic logical, epistemological and metaphysical issues that were debated during 17th and 18th centuries in Western Europe. By the end of the course, you will be conversant in key concepts of the modern era (e.g. rationalism, empiricism). You will also be able to compose philosophical essays on topics such as Descartes philosophical methodology, Spinoza’s metaphysics, Locke’s psychology and Hume’s scepticism. Ideally, you will develop a richer, more coherent understanding of the history of Western philosophy. Since much of our time is spent on close textual analysis, you will also improve your reading comprehension skills and strengthen your abilities to construct logical arguments. These outcomes will be measured through in-class quizzes and tests, and take-home essay assignments.

Required Text
1. To be posted online or distributed in class.

Course Website
To get to the course website, go to the main philosophy page at: http://philosophy.tamucc.edu/. Click on the tab “Courses” and you’ll find a link for our course. Note: to fully access the philosophy website, login using your “islander” email account.

Attendance
Regular attendance will be taken. *Any student who misses more than three classes without a reasonable excuse (e.g. medical) can expect to be penalized (up to a letter grade) on their final grade.* All materials discussed in lectures and covered in the readings are the potential basis for quiz and test questions. Students are therefore expected to attend all lectures and keep up with assigned readings. If you don’t attend class, don’t expect to pass.

**Requirements**  
**Percentage of Final Mark**

1. **Participation**  
   Worth 10%  
   Description: something more than mere physical presence. You don’t have to talk every class but you should be generally engaged with classroom discussions. Whatever you say (assuming it is on topic) can only help and never hurt.

2. **Class Presentation**  
   Worth 10%  
   Description: 10-15 minute presentation on one of the assigned readings (or a section of one of the readings). Instructions will be distributed in class.

3. **In class test, February 25**  
   Worth 20%  
   Description: General test that will cover all materials up to and including February 23 and will take the entire period to write.

4. **Essay, March 23**  
   Worth 20%  
   Description: Essay topic and specific instructions to be distributed in class.

5. **In class test, May 4**  
   Worth 20%  
   Description: General test with the same structure as the first test. Will cover all materials up to and including April 29.

6. **Essay, Due by the end of the exam period**  
   Worth 20%  
   Description: Essay topics and specific instructions for this essay to be distributed in class.
Grading Scale
All grades will be assigned on the standard scale: 90%-100%=A, 80%-89%=B, 70%-79%=C, 60%-69%=D, 59% and below=F.

Missed Test Policy
Students unable to write a test for a medical reason must provide a doctor’s note. If a student is unable to write a test for a similarly serious reason, documentation may be required. Make-up tests will be written at an arranged time under my supervision.

Freedom of Speech and Classroom Etiquette
You are free to ask any question you please about the material. In many cases if you did not understand something, this is because it was not explained clearly to you, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you request clarification. You are also free to argue for any philosophical position you find compelling, as long as you provide reasons for your point of view. It is inevitable that during discussions individual points of view will differ. When they do, our reaction will always be to patiently listen to the reasons offered for a particular conclusion and cooperatively evaluate those reasons.

E-etiquette
*Turn off all cell phones before entering the classroom.* If your cell phone rings during class, I will stop the lecture. Any student who disrupts a lecture by using a personal electronic device will be asked to leave.

Academic Advising
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Disability Services
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are
experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Grade Appeal Process
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Important Dates
December 24-25 Winter Break (CLOSED)
January 2
January 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (CLOSED)
January 21 Classes begin
January 28 Last day to late register or add a class

Spring Break

March 16-20
• Classes will not meet March 16-20.
• The campus will be closed March 19-20.

April 10 Last day to drop a class
May 4 Last day to withdraw from the University
May 5 Last day of classes
May 6 Last day to apply for Spring (May) 2015 graduation
May 7-8, Reading Day
May 11-13 Final examinations
May 14-15 Grading days
May 16 Spring Commencement
May 18 Deadline for faculty to submit spring grades
May 22  Faculty End Date
December 24-January 2  Winter Break (CLOSED)
January 19  Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (CLOSED)

The Fine Print
For all other matters concerning course withdrawal, appeal of grades, academic misconduct, etc, students are strongly advised to consult the rules outlined in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Student Handbook and on the web at: http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/.

TOPICS
Schedule subject to change. For a list of weekly readings refer to the course website

Week 1 (Jan. 21):  Introduction & Course Mechanics
Week 2 (Jan. 26, 28):  Descartes: Methodology & The Cogito
Week 3 (Feb. 2, 4):  Descartes: Physics & Metaphysics
Week 4 (Feb. 9, 11):  Descartes: Mind & Body
Week 5 (Feb. 16, 18):  Spinoza: Substance & God
Week 6 (Feb. 23, 25):  Spinoza: Substance & God (Test 1 Feb. 25)
Week 7 (Mar. 2, 4):  Spinoza: Mind
Week 8 (Mar. 9, 11):  Locke: The Origin of Ideas
Week 9 (Mar. 23, 25):  Locke: Perception
Week 10 (Mar. 30, Apr.1):  Hume: On Philosophy
Week 11 (Apr. 6, 8):  Hume: Ideas & Scepticism
Week 12 (Apr. 13, 15):  Hume: Sceptical Solution & Causation
Week 13 (Apr. 20,22):  Hume: Causation
Week 14 (Apr. 27, 29):  Hume: The Existence of God
Week 16 (May 4):  TEST 2